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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 19 December 2014

[*on the report of the Second Committee (A/69/471/Add.1)*]

69/231. Follow-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

The General Assembly,

Recalling the Istanbul Declaration[1] and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020,[2] adopted at the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/280 of 17 June 2011, in which the Assembly called upon all the relevant stakeholders to commit to implementing the Istanbul Programme of Action,

Reaffirming the overarching goal of the Istanbul Programme of Action of overcoming the structural challenges faced by the least developed countries in order to eradicate poverty, achieve internationally agreed development goals and enable graduation from the least developed country category,

Recalling its resolutions 68/18 of 4 December 2013 and 68/224 of 20 December 2013,

Recalling also Economic and Social Council resolution 2014/29 of 25 July 2014 on the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020,

Expressing its deep concern over the most severe and complex outbreak of Ebola that has ruthlessly affected three least developed countries, namely Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, which exposes the fact that, while all countries are at risk of such outbreaks, the least developed countries are particularly vulnerable to public health emergencies, with severe impacts on lives and livelihoods and on the economies of those countries,

Emphasizing the need for coordinated implementation and coherent follow-up and monitoring of the Istanbul Programme of Action, and noting the key role of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States in this regard, as set out in paragraph 155 of the Programme of Action,

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[1] *Report of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Istanbul, Turkey, 9–13 May 2011* (A/CONF.219/7), chap. I.

[2] Ibid., chap. II.

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Recalling its resolutions 59/209 of 20 December 2004 and 65/286 of 29 June 2011 on the importance of a smooth transition for countries graduating from the list of least developed countries, and reaffirming the aim of enabling half of the least developed countries to meet the criteria for graduation by 2020,

Recalling also its invitation to development partners to consider the least developed country indicators, gross national income per capita, the human assets index and the economic vulnerability index as part of their criteria for allocating official development assistance,

Noting the conclusion of the Secretary-General's Climate Summit,[3] and welcoming its contribution to the existing political momentum, with a view to galvanizing action to address climate change,

Taking note of the ministerial declaration adopted at the Ministerial Meeting of the Least Developed Countries, held in New York on 26 September 2014,[4]

Taking note also of the report of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, entitled "State of the Least Developed Countries, 2014", with the special theme "Extreme poverty eradication in the least developed countries and the post-2015 development agenda",

1. *Takes note* of the reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020[5] and on strengthening investment promotion regimes for foreign direct investment in the least developed countries;[6]

2. *Welcomes* the progress made by many of the least developed countries in implementing the Istanbul Programme of Action,[2] including by mainstreaming it into relevant planning documents and development strategies, calls upon the least developed countries, with the support of their development partners, to fulfil their commitments and to promote the implementation of the Programme of Action, including by integrating its provisions into their national policies and development frameworks and conducting regular reviews with the full involvement of all key stakeholders, and in this regard invites the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council, including United Nations regional and functional commissions, the United Nations resident coordinator system and the United Nations country teams, to actively support the integration and implementation of the Programme of Action;

3. *Also welcomes* the progress in, and stresses the importance of, mainstreaming the Istanbul Programme of Action into the development cooperation frameworks of development partners, and calls upon the development partners to further integrate the Programme of Action into their respective national cooperation policy frameworks, programmes and activities, as appropriate, to ensure enhanced, predictable and targeted support to the least developed countries, as set out in the Programme of Action, and the delivery of their commitments, and to consider appropriate measures to overcome shortfalls or shortcomings, if any;

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[3] See www.un.org/climatechange/summit/2014/09/2014-climate-change-summary-chairs-summary/.

[4] A/C.2/69/2, annex.

[5] A/69/95-E/2014/81.

[6] A/69/270.

4. *Calls upon* the international community to act urgently and decisively to address the outbreak of Ebola in some West African least developed countries, which has highlighted the fundamental need to strengthen national health systems and increase resilience and coordinated responses to public health challenges and emergencies, particularly in the least developed countries, as laid out in priority areas (*e*) and (*f*) of the Istanbul Programme of Action, in order to prevent, detect and rapidly respond to infectious diseases and other health emergencies, and calls upon all development partners to continue to provide financial and technical support for the risk mitigation strategies of the least developed countries in order to strengthen their capacity to respond to public health challenges and emergencies;

5. *Expresses its concern* that all countries, particularly the least developed countries, are vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change and are already experiencing increased impacts, including persistent drought and extreme weather events, sea-level rise, coastal erosion, glacial lake outburst floods and ocean acidification, which further threaten food security and efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development;

6. *Welcomes* the fact that bilateral net official development assistance to the least developed countries is estimated to have increased by 12.3 per cent in 2013, according to the preliminary estimate of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, while noting a decrease of 9.4 per cent in real terms in 2012, reiterates that official development assistance continues to be the largest source of external financing for the development of the least developed countries, that it plays an important role in their development and that progress has been made during the past decade in increasing the flow of official development assistance to the least developed countries, underlines that the fulfilment of all official development assistance commitments is crucial, including the commitments by many developed countries to achieving the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance to developing countries by 2015, as well as the target of 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance to the least developed countries, and urges developed countries that have not yet done so to fulfil their commitments for official development assistance to the least developed countries;

7. *Recalls* the commitment, contained in the Istanbul Programme of Action, that donor countries should review their official development assistance commitments in 2015 and consider further enhancing the resources for the least developed countries, and in this regard urges donor countries to give high priority to the least developed countries in terms of their allocation of official development assistance, taking into account their needs, complex challenges and the resources gap;

8. *Reaffirms* the commitments made at the Fourth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization relating to the least developed countries,[7] takes note of the decisions taken at the Ninth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization, held in Bali, Indonesia, from 3 to 7 December 2013, in particular the decision on duty-free and quota-free market access for the least developed countries, preferential rules of origin for the least developed countries and operationalization of the waiver concerning preferential treatment to services and service suppliers of the least developed countries, calls upon developed countries, and developing countries declaring themselves in a position to do so, to take steps towards the goal of realizing the timely implementation of duty-free and quota-free market access, on a lasting basis, for all least developed countries, consistent with

[7] See A/C.2/56/7, annex.

the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration, and in this regard notes with appreciation the realization by some developed and developing countries of duty-free and quota-free market access for all products from all least developed countries;

9. *Underscores* that the ownership, leadership and primary responsibility for development in the least developed countries rests with themselves, and also underscores that good governance, inclusiveness and transparency, as well as domestic resource mobilization, are central to the development process of the least developed countries and that these efforts need to be given concrete and substantial international support, in a spirit of shared responsibility and mutual accountability, through renewed and strengthened global partnership;

10. *Calls upon* the least developed countries, their development partners, the United Nations system and all other actors to fully and effectively implement, in a coordinated, coherent and expeditious manner, the commitments that have been made in the Istanbul Programme of Action in its eight priority areas, namely (*a*) productive capacity, (*b*) agriculture, food security and rural development, (*c*) trade, (*d*) commodities, (*e*) human and social development, (*f*) multiple crises and other emerging challenges, (*g*) mobilizing financial resources for development and capacity-building, and (*h*) good governance at all levels;

11. *Calls upon* the developing countries, guided by the spirit of solidarity and consistent with their capabilities, to provide support for the effective implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in mutually agreed areas of cooperation, within the framework of South-South cooperation, which is a complement to, but not a substitute for, North-South cooperation;

12. *Reiterates* the importance of continuing to mainstream South-South cooperation, particularly for the benefit of the least developed countries, through the United Nations development system, including the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, in line with decision 18/1 of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation[8] and relevant General Assembly resolutions, including resolutions 67/226 and 67/227 of 21 December 2012 and 68/230 of 20 December 2013, and the strategic plans of the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, as appropriate;

13. *Invites* the private sector, civil society and foundations to contribute to the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in their respective areas of competence, in line with the national priorities of the least developed countries;

14. *Takes note with appreciation* of the work undertaken thus far by the Secretary-General to constitute a high-level panel of experts to carry out a feasibility study for a technology bank and science, technology and innovation supporting mechanism dedicated to the least developed countries, welcomes the announcement by the Secretary-General regarding the composition of the panel, and looks forward to the conclusion of the panel's work in line with its resolution 68/224;

15. *Reaffirms* its decision that the special needs and development priorities of the least developed countries, including the eight priority areas of the Istanbul Programme of Action, such as productive capacity-building, including through rapid development of infrastructure and energy, should be given appropriate consideration in relation to the post-2015 development agenda, and in this regard invites the Office of the High Representative to continue to extend the necessary substantive

[8] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 39* (A/69/39), chap. I.

support to the least developed countries in preparing their positions on these matters as part of its ongoing work;

16. *Underlines* the need to ensure the mutual accountability of the least developed countries and their development partners for delivering the commitments undertaken under the Istanbul Programme of Action, reiterates that the Development Cooperation Forum should continue to take into consideration the Istanbul Programme of Action when it reviews the trends in international development cooperation, as well as policy coherence for development, and stresses the need for providing appropriate space and platforms for structured dialogue between the least developed countries and their development partners;

17. *Stresses* that the least developed countries should receive a special focus throughout the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All (2014–2024), with a view to ensuring the realization of the objective of ensuring access to energy for all by 2030, as well as other energy goals and targets set out in the Istanbul Programme of Action, requests that, in the Secretary-General's coordination of the Decade, within existing resources, the least developed countries receive such special focus throughout, with a view to ensuring the successful realization of the Decade, and in this regard welcomes the renewed focus on least developed countries within the Sustainable Energy for All initiative;

18. *Recalls* paragraph 157 of the Istanbul Programme of Action, in which the General Assembly was invited to consider conducting a comprehensive high-level midterm review of the implementation of the Programme of Action;

19. *Welcomes* the generous offer of the Government of Turkey to host the comprehensive high-level midterm review;

20. *Decides* that the comprehensive high-level midterm review:

(*a*) Shall be held, on an exceptional basis, in Antalya, Turkey, for a period of three days in June 2016, consisting of opening and closing plenary meetings and four additional plenary meetings, as well as four parallel thematic round-table meetings;

(*b*) Shall be held at the highest possible political level;

(*c*) Shall result in an intergovernmentally negotiated and agreed outcome in the form of a political declaration;

(*d*) Shall ensure that the summaries of the plenary meetings and other deliberations of the review are included in the report of the review;

21. *Requests* the President of the General Assembly at its seventieth session to appoint two co-facilitators, one from a developed country and one from a developing country, to oversee and direct informal intergovernmental consultations on all issues relating to the review and its preparatory process;

22. *Requests* the co-facilitators to present a draft outcome document in the form of a political declaration, no later than March 2016 and in advance of the preparatory meeting of experts, prepared on the basis of inputs from the national and regional preparatory meetings, the report of the Secretary-General and other inputs, including those from Member States;

23. *Requests* the President of the General Assembly to organize a four-day preparatory meeting of experts, to be chaired by the co-facilitators, with interpretation services on an "as available" basis, in March 2016, with a view to considering the draft outcome document;

24. *Decides* that all negotiations on the outcome document shall be held at United Nations Headquarters in New York, and strongly encourages Member States to conclude negotiations on the draft outcome document in advance of the comprehensive high-level midterm review;

25. *Also decides* that the comprehensive high-level midterm review and its preparatory process shall be open to participation by all States Members of the United Nations or States members of the specialized agencies and observers in the General Assembly, and that the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, as well as the supplementary arrangements established for the Commission on Sustainable Development by the Council in its decisions 1993/215 of 12 February 1993 and 1995/201 of 8 February 1995, shall apply;

26. *Invites* the host country to consider hosting, with the assistance of the Office of the High Representative, within its existing mandate and resources, and with the support of extrabudgetary resources, as available and appropriate, a private sector forum on investment opportunities in least developed countries, and encourages relevant representatives of Member States and the private sector to support and participate in the forum;

27. *Underlines* that there will be two regional-level preparatory meetings, taking advantage of the biennial regional meetings already scheduled for 2015, one in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa, which will include Haiti, and the other in collaboration with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, which will include Yemen, with the regional-level meetings to be supported by broad-based and inclusive country-level preparations, and that the outcomes of the regional-level preparatory meetings should be considered in the comprehensive high-level midterm review;

28. *Decides* that the scope of the midterm comprehensive global review shall be as follows:

(*a*) To undertake a comprehensive review of the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action by the least developed countries and their development partners, share best practices and lessons learned and identify obstacles and constraints encountered and actions and initiatives needed to overcome them, as well as new challenges and emerging issues;

(*b*) To reaffirm the global commitment to address the special needs of the least developed countries made at the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and to further strengthen the global partnership for development for least developed countries in all priority areas of the Istanbul Programme of Action in order to ensure the timely, effective and full implementation of the Programme of Action during the remainder of the Decade, while taking into account the post-2015 development agenda as it relates to the least developed countries;

29. *Underlines* that the Office of the High Representative, as the focal point, in accordance with mandates given by the General Assembly in its resolution 56/227 of 24 December 2001, has the responsibility for ensuring that the preparations are carried out effectively and efficiently and for mobilizing and coordinating the active involvement of the organizations of the United Nations system;

30. *Invites* the Secretary-General to convene a United Nations system high-level event during the comprehensive high-level midterm review, with a view to ensuring the full mobilization of the United Nations system in support of the least developed countries and the coordinated and timely implementation by the United Nations system of the Istanbul Programme of Action and the outcome of the review;

31. *Requests* the President of the General Assembly to organize, early in 2016, a one-day special thematic event, with the participation of Member States, non-governmental organizations, civil society, the private sector and academic institutions, in order to provide input to the comprehensive high-level midterm review;

32. *Invites* the Economic and Social Council to consider the issue of the comprehensive high-level midterm review as part of its coordination and management meetings in 2016;

33. *Requests* the organs, organizations, funds and programmes of the United Nations system to undertake sectoral appraisals in their respective fields of competence on the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action, with special emphasis on areas where implementation has remained insufficient, and to make proposals for new measures, as necessary, as further inputs to the preparation for the comprehensive high-level midterm review, and in this regard affirms that appropriate inter-agency meetings should be convened in order to ensure the full mobilization and coordination of the entire United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions;

34. *Emphasizes* the importance of country-level preparations as a critical input to the preparatory process for the comprehensive high-level midterm review and to the implementation of and follow-up to its outcome, in this context calls upon the least developed countries to undertake their national reviews on the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action, with a particular focus on progress, obstacles, constraints, actions and measures necessary to further its implementation, in close collaboration with the Office of the High Representative and the United Nations country teams, as part of their existing workplans, and in this regard invites the United Nations country teams to support the least developed countries in the preparation of their national reports, in close collaboration with the Office of the High Representative;

35. *Requests* the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, in her capacity as Chair of the United Nations Development Group, to ensure the full involvement of the United Nations resident coordinators and country teams in the least developed countries in the preparations for the comprehensive high-level midterm review, in particular at the country level, including in the preparation of national reports;

36. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive report, by the first quarter of 2016, on the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action, in lieu of his report to the General Assembly at its seventy-first session and to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2016;

37. *Reiterates* the critical importance of the full and effective participation of the least developed countries in the comprehensive high-level midterm review at the national, regional and global levels, stresses that adequate resources should be provided, and in this regard requests the Secretary-General to mobilize extrabudgetary resources in order to cover the cost of the participation of two government representatives from each least developed country in the review and the preparatory meeting of experts;

38. *Urges* Member States, and invites other multilateral development partners, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to make voluntary contributions to the trust fund established by the Secretary-General in accordance with resolution 59/244 of 22 December 2004;

39. *Calls upon* all Member States to take a positive interest in the preparation of the comprehensive high-level midterm review and to be represented at a high level in the plenary meeting of the review, with a view to reaching a successful outcome;

40. *Stresses* the importance of the effective participation of all relevant stakeholders, including parliamentarians, civil society and the private sector, in the comprehensive high-level midterm review and its preparatory process, in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996;

41. *Notes with appreciation* that several least developed countries have expressed their intention to reach the status of graduation by 2020, invites them to start the preparations for their graduation and transition strategy, and reiterates its request to all relevant organizations of the United Nations system, led by the Office of the High Representative, to extend the necessary support in this regard in a coordinated and coherent manner;

42. *Invites* the Committee for Development Policy to continue to give due consideration to the specific constraints and vulnerabilities faced by each least developed country, including small island and landlocked least developed countries, the least developed countries with mountains and fragile ecology, low-lying coastal least developed countries and the least developed countries with large segments of the population living in extreme poverty, high dependency on primary commodity exports, low agricultural productivity and food insecurity, climate, environmental and natural disaster vulnerability, public health insecurity and energy insecurity, as well as those least developed countries caught in and emerging from conflict;

43. *Notes* the offer of the Government of Nepal to host a ministerial meeting of the Asia-Pacific least developed countries on graduation and the post-2015 development agenda, which was held in Kathmandu from 16 to 18 December 2014, and looks forward to a successful outcome, agreed upon by the ministers of those countries, which reflects their various issues and concerns;

44. *Recognizes* that private capital flows, particularly foreign direct investment, play a complementary and catalytic role in building and strengthening productive capacity in the least developed countries, also recognizes that many least developed countries have made strong efforts to improve investment climates to attract increased foreign direct investment flows and enhance the benefits of these flows for their economies, which have been complemented by actions by their development partners, which appear to have had a positive impact, as indicated by a significant rise in foreign direct investment flows to the least developed countries in recent years, and expresses its concern that levels of investment, both foreign and domestic, in the least developed countries have yet to reach their potential, underscoring that much more needs to be done;

45. *Underlines* the need for stronger and more focused policies and strategies by the least developed countries, the home countries of foreign direct investment, international organizations and other stakeholders, as appropriate, to substantially increase foreign direct investment flows to the least developed countries in the coming years, and in this regard decides to consider those needs in the context of the comprehensive high-level midterm review of the Istanbul Programme of Action, focusing on, inter alia, the potential importance to the least developed countries of:

(*a*) Access to information on existing investment facilities and foreign direct investment support programmes;

(*b*) Technical support to assist the least developed countries in negotiating complex large-scale contracts;

(*c*) Access to and further strengthening of advisory support in investment-related dispute resolution;

(*d*) Risk insurance and guarantees, in close collaboration with the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development;

(*e*) Regulatory and legal frameworks that can attract foreign direct investment by improving investment climates and promoting enabling environments at all levels;

46. *Recognizes* the importance of building productive capacity as a critical enabler for the development and graduation of the least developed countries, as defined in priority area (*a*) of the Istanbul Programme of Action, and calls upon the least developed countries and their development partners to ensure enhanced focus on policies and means to address productive capacity-building, takes note in this regard of the Cotonou Agenda for productive capacity-building in the least developed countries,[9] adopted by the ministers of the least developed countries at the ministerial meeting held in Cotonou, Benin, from 28 to 31 July 2014, and invites all stakeholders to give due consideration to productive capacity-building in the annual review of the Programme of Action by the Economic and Social Council;

47. *Also recognizes* that the activities relating to the least developed countries carried out within the Secretariat need to be further coordinated and consolidated in order to ensure effective monitoring and follow-up of the Istanbul Programme of Action, led by the Office of the High Representative, and to provide well-coordinated support for the realization of the goal of enabling half of the least developed countries to meet the criteria for graduation by 2020;

48. *Takes note* of the work of the Inter-Agency Consultative Group for least developed countries, led by the Office of the High Representative, reiterates its invitation to the Secretary-General to appropriately integrate it within the framework of the High-level Committee on Programmes of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, notes the steps taken by the Chief Executives Board and the High-level Committee in supporting the coordination and follow-up of the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action on a system-wide basis, reiterates its invitation to the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of the Chief Executives Board, to include the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in the agenda of the Board, encourages the Office of the High Representative, in close cooperation with the secretariat of the Board, to finalize a toolkit for mainstreaming the Programme of Action into the work programmes of the organizations of the United Nations system, and requests the Secretary-General to report on further progress made in this regard;

49. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventieth session a progress report on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 and on the implementation of the present resolution.

75th plenary meeting
19 December 2014

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[9] A/69/392, annex.